

## AIDS NETWORK OF EDMONTON

### NEWSLETTER

15 September 1986

Volume 1 Number 7

#### DEAN BENNER

On 2 August 1986, the reality of AIDS struck home with the sudden passing of our good friend Dean Benner of AIDS. Dean was my special friend, and he touched my life in a way that very few people have. I spent a very intense week with Dean at the Charles Camshell Hospital and was with him when he left us. Dean and I both knew the seriousness of the situation (perhaps before others were aware) and that these would be our last moments together. Although our time together was short, the love and caring exchanged between us will replace the pain and will become a part of me forever. I also feel that his death brought the reality of AIDS much closer to many individuals in the Edmonton gay community, Dean was actively involved in many of the gay community's social service activities and had himself provided counselling for those concerned about the AIDS issue.

I feel that because of Dean's accepting nature, his concern and personal involvement with the gay men and women in this community, and his tremendous capacity for unconditional love, his life held a special meaning for many of us.

Dean was fortunate to be well enough initially at the hospital to know that he was deeply cared for by his family, friends and associates, and that meant a lot to Dean and I, and helped us to prepare for the days ahead. Knowing this, I have come to believe that we should try to be more aware of the needs of our brothers and sisters in the gay community, to judge less and be more open to each others needs and to develop support for each other in the good times. We will need it to sustain us if the reality strikes home again, as it may very well.

Clark Wilson

#### ROSS ARMSTRONG MEMORIAL FUND

On 1 July 1986, the Ross Armstrong Memorial Fund was established in honour of Ross. The AIDS Network of Edmonton Society felt it important to remember Ross in a way that would reflect something of his desire to help other people whose lives have been touched by AIDS or ARC.

To this end, the fund uses monies donated or raised directly to assist persons with AIDS or ARC who are experiencing financial hardship. All donations to the fund are tax deductible. Donations can be made through the office of the Executive Director.

The fund will be administered by an independent panel of appointed members.

#### ELIGIBILITY & AWARDS

Any person with AIDS or ARC is eligible for an award. The award may also be made available to someone close to the person with AIDS or ARC. A person need not reside in Edmonton to apply for and receive an award. The amount and use of the monies awarded to a person will be determined solely by the fund administrators. Their decision will be based on the monies available, the need of the person and the goals of the AIDS Network of Edmonton Society.

#### AIDS NETWORK OF EDMONTON

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#### Office Hours:

Monday & Tuesday. 10.00 - 6.00  
Wednesday to Friday. 10.00 - 9.00

## WOMEN AND AIDS

There remain many unanswered questions about AIDS and heterosexual transmission of HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS. In Africa, where the virus is believed to have originated, AIDS is chiefly a heterosexual problem. Speculation abounds as to the reason for this difference. For example, various factors (uncommon in our society) may predispose heterosexual Africans to contract AIDS. There is also a longer history of AIDS in Africa.

Current knowledge and assumptions about AIDS in women in western countries come from studies of women at risk for AIDS. While these studies are still in their infancy, there are some interesting data already available. For example, just over half of all women with AIDS report a history of IV drug use. It is also known that women can be infected through vaginal intercourse, although the association between AIDS and the number of sexual partners, duration of relationships, or particular sexual behaviour remains unknown.

Whether the prevalence of HIV infection among heterosexuals in North America will ever approach that found in Africa remains unknown. To date, the number of cases of AIDS in men whose only known means of possible infection is from infected women is very small. This is in contrast to the number of women infected by men. Inferences about the proportion of HIV infected women compared with AIDS cases, factors associated with HIV antibody development, types of disease manifestation, and the progression of the condition, all need to be studied in women specifically. As a group uniquely different from other risk groups, the differences in ways that women develop AIDS, compared to other groups, is very important.

Until more is known, women with multiple sex partners should practice safer sex. Risk reduction is particularly important to women who are at risk and are considering childbirth, since they risk infecting the fetus or newborn.

Karl Siegfried

### FLASHBACK

Remember! 25¢ from every beer and highball sold at FLASHBACK is donated to the AIDS Network.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Thanks Flashback!

## AIDS Vigil of Prayer

The AIDS Network of Edmonton would like to thank all those who took part in the AIDS Vigil of Prayer that was held in several locations in Edmonton on 5, 6, & 7 September 1986. A tremendous amount of effort and time went into the planning of this event and no little amount of conscious-raising took place in the general public.

We are pleased at the largely positive media response that the vigil evoked. While attendance at any of the services rarely exceeded fifty, the effects of the vigil are still being felt as telephone calls come into this office requesting further information and the co-ordinators of the vigil are asked to provide future information for church and social service groups.

### LATEST AIDS STATISTICS FOR ALBERTA:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Edmonton	8	7
Calgary	25	15
Elsewhere	4	2
Pediatric Cases	2	0

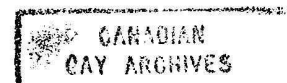
Source: Alberta Community Health,  
2 September 1986.

### CONDOM MACHINES INSTALLED

The AIDS Network is in the process of having condom machines installed in each of the three bars in Edmonton. At the present time, the condoms are being supplied free-of-charge to the users. Hopefully, this will help stop further spread of the HIV virus.

### BRIEF REMINDER:

Please save your cancelled stamps (with at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of the paper to which they are attached saved) for an ongoing stamp drive. The collected stamps will be sent to an agency that buys them in bulk lots. Remember, every little bit helps! Thanks.



"AIDS Network of Edmonton Newsletter 15 September 1986 Vol. 1 Issue. 7." AIDS Network of Edmonton Newsletter, vol. 1, no. 7, 15 Sept. 1986. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/YTFABO837705441/AHSl?u=edmo87290&sid=bookmark-AHSl](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/YTFABO837705441/AHSl?u=edmo87290&sid=bookmark-AHSl). Accessed 10 July 2024.